

Bridge Opening Leads

Statistically, the opening lead is far and away the most important single card the defence plays. Half the time you are defending.

This is a Guide only it depends on the shape of your hand & information available.

Opening Leads against a Trump Contract

You Have	Lead	Example/Comments
3 Honour Card Sequence	Top card	A-AKQ, K-KQJ, Q-QJ10, J-J109
2 Honour Card Sequence	Top card	A-AK632, K-KQ6, Q-QJ82, J-J1053
Your Partners Suit	Highest Card in Partners Suit	Partner will know your and dummy's suit before needing to respond.
A Suit NOT Bid by the Opposition	See below	Opposition has not shown strength in it.
A Major	The Major see below	If opposition is bidding Notrumps and/or Minors they may not have majors.
Singleton or Doubleton Object is to run out of that suit and trump.	Top of a doubleton.	Don't rush, what if you have QJx in the trump suit? Your likely to take a trick anyway and you probably don't have enough trumps for 2 tricks.
Trumps and you think Opposition has a 4-4 fit.	Low Trump	Generally best if you have a few trumps. Opposition 1C > 1H > 2H (Maybe a 4-4 fit)
An Ace	NO! Aces are meant to capture Kings & Queens	However consider leading an Ace if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner has bid the suit, • Opposition has bid every other suit, • A Singleton and you have a few trumps, or • A Doubleton hoping partner has the King & you have a few trumps
Suit with NO Honours	Top of Nothing	9 - 9643
Summary	Top of a doubleton Top of 3 or 4 small cards Low of 3 cards & honour Top of 2 touching honours Top of 3 touching honours or 4th highest of a long suit	8 - 83 7 - 7643 4 - K64 Q - QJ76 K - KQJ 3 - Q9532 (see High/Low or Odd/Even alternative)
Kxxx or Qxxx & agreed High/Low indicator with Partner	2,3,4 or 5 to Encourage 6+ to Discourage	Partner plays highest card in that suit to draw Ace. Partner assumes your highest is a Jack.
Kxxx or Qxxx & agreed Odd/Even indicator with Partner	3,5,7,9 to Encourage 2,4,6,8 to Discourage	Partner to play highest card in that suit to draw Ace Partner assumes your highest is a Jack

Opening Leads against a Notrump Contract

The defence gets a vital opportunity to establish their suit, act wisely!

Generally lead your longest and strongest suit.

You Have	Lead	Example/Comments
3 Honour Card Sequence	Top card	A-AKQ, K-KQJ, Q-QJ10, J-J109
Interior Sequence	2nd Highest	J-AJ10 7, 10-Q10974
Longest & Strongest Suit (Strongest when two suits of equal length)	4th highest	2-KQ72, 3-Q953 (consider High/Low or Odd/Even alternatives)
Kxxx or Qxxx & agreed High/Low indicator with Partner	2,3,4 or 5 to Encourage 6+ to Discourage	Partner to play highest card in that suit to draw Ace Partner assumes your highest is a Jack
Kxxx or Qxxx & agreed Odd/Even indicator with Partner	3,5,7,9 to Encourage 2,4,6,8 to Discourage	Partner to play highest card in that suit to draw Ace Partner assumes your highest is a Jack
A Suit that has NOT been Bid by the Opposition	Opposition has not shown strength in it.	Opposition should have cover in the suit, that is: A, Kx, Qxx but maybe not a long run.
Your Partners Suit	Maybe not	You know your partners suit so normally better to let partner know your longest and strongest.
2 Honour Card Sequence	Maybe consider another suit to check Dummy first	AK632, KQ6, QJ82, or J1053
Singleton or Doubleton	NO! Doubleton - Top Card	Lead Longest and Strongest suit in Notrumps.
An Ace	NO! Aces are meant to capture Kings & Queens	However lead an Ace if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of a 3 card sequence AKQ or • Opposition is in Slam and you have 2 Aces!
A Suit with NO Honours	Top of Nothing	9 - 9643